



BRIAN FISCHER
COMMISSIONER

STATE OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES
THE HARRIMAN STATE CAMPUS – BUILDING 2
1220 WASHINGTON AVENUE
ALBANY, N.Y. 12226-2050

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Superintendents

FROM: Brian Fischer, Commissioner

SUBJ: Marcy RMHU Opening

DATE: December 14, 2009

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'B. Fischer', is written over the 'FROM' line of the memorandum.

I am pleased to announce the formal opening of the Residential Mental Health Unit (RMHU) at Marcy Correctional Facility on December 15, 2009, with the acceptance of the first seven (7) inmates into the program. The opening of this 100-bed, first-of-its-kind unit in the nation demonstrates our commitment to providing the safest possible environment for both Department of Correctional Services (DOCS) and Office of Mental Health (OMH) employees while offering the highest caliber care and treatment to inmates with serious mental illness (SMI) who have also committed significant acts of misconduct while incarcerated. Participating inmates will be offered four hours per day of structured out-of-cell therapeutic treatment and programming.

I am very proud of the dedication, the commitment, the professionalism and the unparalleled efforts expended by our entire work force for the past few years in providing innovative programs for inmates with mental illness. This agency has implemented an important number of new initiatives and expanded existing programs, all designed to provide effective care and treatment to inmates with mental illness wherever they may be housed. With the addition of the 100-bed RMHU, these other initiatives and program expansions include the following:

Intermediate Care Program (ICP): 190 beds were added for a total of 781 ICP beds. ICPs are operating in 14 facilities. This includes the 38-bed Intensive Intermediate Care Program at Wende.

Transitional ICPs: 217 Transitional ICP beds have been created at 10 facilities.

Special Treatment Program (STP): 49 beds were added for a total of 108 STP beds. STP programs are operational at Attica, Five Points and Green Haven.

Group Therapy Program (GTP): We have six (6) therapeutic cubicles located in the Special Housing Units (SHU) at Clinton, Elmira, Southport and Wende where we are

able to offer the heightened level of care to up to 48 inmates who have a SHU sentence and who are diagnosed as SMI.

Behavioral Health Units (BHU) & (TBU): There are 102 Behavioral Health Unit beds between Great Meadow and Sullivan, and a 16-bed Therapeutic Behavioral Unit at Bedford Hills.

Community Orientation and Reentry Program (CORP): We have a 31-bed unit at Sing Sing for the Community Orientation and Reentry Program (CORP), which deals specifically with the reentry needs of inmates with mental illness.

In addition, we have rebuilt or constructed Residential Crisis Treatment Program (RCTP) units at six (6) of our 15 Level 1 facilities (those that offer the full range of mental health services) to provide a total of 112 observation cells and 102 RCTP dorm beds.

Taken together, DOCS has designated 1,569 beds for assignment to secure, treat and monitor offenders who exhibit serious mental illness.

We have also modified nearly 700 solid cell doors at various SHU's in order to facilitate and enhance communications with inmates in these units.

Lastly, OMH began screening every inmate who enters our system. Previously, OMH screened only an estimated 40 percent of inmates entering the system.

Finally, our Joint Central Office Review Committee conducts monthly televideo conferences involving two facility Joint Case Management Committees each session to review the care, treatment and program plans for inmates with mental illness.

There is no question in my mind that our mental health delivery system for this challenging and oftentimes very difficult special needs population now serves as the premier model for the rest of the country.

Please extend my personal appreciation to all involved staff that have helped to make these complex and comprehensive initiatives a reality.